

29 DEC 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

THROUGH : Director of Logistics

SUBJECT : Refurbishment of Main Reception Room

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1. The two attached clippings are pertinent to [REDACTED] 6 December proposal to you that we depart from schedule by purchasing Knoll furniture for the main reception room of the Langley building.

2. Knoll furniture is recommended for this major public space by the Agency's design consultant. As Jim's memorandum notes, the consultant's recommendation is supported by the Fine Arts Commission. However the choice of Knoll furniture is not so much a case of either professional training or personal taste as it is a recognition of the fact that the Knoll Company designs and also manufactures some of the finest artifacts that the U.S. has produced in this century. Note the first of the two attachments: an article from the magazine Interiors, reporting that the recent exhibition of Knoll furniture at the Louvre -- the only such exhibition ever given to any American designer/manufacturer -- marked Knoll as being "one of the epoch-making forces in the history of design." (If the picture on the first page of this Interiors article had reproduced more clearly you would see that one of the chairs Knoll exhibited at the Louvre is one that has been chosen for our own main reception room.)

3. The second article attached is a clipping from The Washington Post in which Wolf Von Eckardt, the syndicated architectural critic, questions why the State Department's reception rooms are being furnished with enormously expensive antiques, as though State's sterile structure is an 18th century Philadelphia town house, rather than with the finest products of twentieth century America, where our designers, says Von Eckhardt, lead the world. "Where we are beating them (the other countries)," he says, "is in the area of 20th century interior design. America's modern designers, the people behind Knoll and Herman Miller, the two foremost American interior design firms. ... are world leaders." (Underlining added.)

4. It is for this reason, conscious but not always clearly-stated -- a pursuit of excellence, particularly U.S.-produced excellence -- that CIA already has departed from schedule by using furniture from Knoll in two of our major public spaces: the Executive Dining Room (the chairs) and the Library reading room. The FAC recommendation is that further divergence from schedule now be approved for a third major public space, the main reception room.

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Acting Chairman
Fine Arts Commission

2 Attachments:

Extract, Interiors, April 1972
Extract, The Washington Post,
9 December 1972

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cc: [redacted] w/atts
Chief, LSD w/atts